



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Honors Outstanding Natural Areas *Livingston County Fiscal Court, Logan County Conservation Districts receive 2012 Stewardship Awards*

Frankfort, Ky. (Oct. 19, 2012) – The Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (KHLCF) has recognized two partners with its annual Stewardship Award: the Livingston County Fiscal Court was honored for its management of the Livingston County Natural Areas and Logan County conservation districts for work on the Baker Natural Area.

Each year the KHLCF honors partners that have done an exceptional job in managing its properties.

Both sites have made great strides in controlling invasive exotic species, improving natural habitat, and providing passive recreation and educational opportunities. With more than 2,500 acres in three sites – Bissell Bluff, Newman's Bluff, and the Livingston County Wildlife Management Area -- Livingston County Fiscal Court manages more natural areas on the local level than any other Kentucky county except Jefferson. These sites offer a wide range of benefits, from protecting rare plant species to providing hiking, bird watching, and hunting opportunities.

Livingston County has formed a strong community organization to coordinate its efforts, the Livingston County Nature Board, and by bringing together organizations such as the Kentucky Department of Fish and

Wildlife Resources and The Nature Conservancy for support. Their organization is a model for the dozens of other locally owned sites protected by the KHLCF throughout the Commonwealth.

The Baker Natural Area was the first site owned by a local conservation district funded by the KHLCF. Although it is less than 100 acres, it protects rare plants and habitats and provides hiking opportunities. In addition, Logan County conservation districts have coordinated an extensive environmental education program for adults and students in grades K through 12. These efforts include hosting environmental and agricultural field days for local school children, the regional Envirothon competition, Logan County Chamber of Commerce's "Leadership Logan" Environmental Tour, and working with Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. The districts have partnered with Western Kentucky University to install a local Mesonet weather station, which is accessible online.

Environmental education is vital to teaching the next generations of Kentuckians the importance of protecting the places that make Kentucky unique. According to KHLCF biologist Zeb Weese, "While the Baker Natural Area and Livingston County Natural Areas are very different sites, they are both excellent examples of how community involvement can really accomplish a lot.

While the main focus of the KHLCF is protecting and preserving natural habitats, these sites have really done a fantastic job of providing public access to these sites without compromising the natural features that make them special," he added.

The KHLCF has funded the protection of over 76,000 acres in 62 counties since 1995 by granting funds to local and state government agencies to purchase natural areas. The KHLCF is funded by the sale of "Nature's Finest" license plates, environmental fines and the state portion of the unmined minerals tax. By state law, all land purchased with KHLCF funds must be managed for the benefit of habitat conservation and passive recreation.

For more information, visit the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund website at <http://heritageland.ky.gov> or contact Zeb Weese at 502-573-3080.

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